|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Revision 1 to**  **Document CWG-FHR-16/24** |
| **9 October 2023** |
| **English only** |
|  |  |
| Contribution from Algeria (People's Democratic Republic of), China (People’s Republic of), Cuba (Republic of), Russian Federation and South Africa (Republic of) | |
| THE PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING FUTURE AREA OFFICES | |
| **Purpose**  The Administrations of Algeria (People's Democratic Republic of), China (People’s Republic of), Cuba (Republic of), Russian Federation and South Africa (Republic of) invite the CWG-FHR to consider the proposal for establishing future area offices.  **Action required**  The CWG-FHR is invited to **consider** the proposal, and **take actions** as appropriate.  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **References**  [Document CWG-FHR-16/10](https://www.itu.int/md/S23-CWGFHR16-C-0010/en) | |

1. **Background**

As an extension of ITU as a whole, the regional presence plays a vital role in the achievement of ITU's mission, enhancing the Union's understanding of local contexts and responding to countries' needs effectively, in particular, the role of the ITU regional and area offices is to assist countries in the regions in many areas, such as in execution of and follow-up to projects, including ones related to the regional initiatives, bridging the standardization gap, capacity building related to frequency management, updating the regions on ITU activities and strengthening collaboration with regional telecommunication organizations.

Since 2019, ITU and telecommunication development sector have performed a comprehensive programmatic, strategic and financial assessment and review of ITU’s Regional Presence to improve the responding and serving abilities of regional presence. ITU has also made a 3-year term work plan to implement the recommendations proposed by the outcome of review report. We noticed that most of the recommendations have been implemented or in progress. As the results, the abilities of regional presence of serving memberships has improved gradually since then.

All Membership of ITU attach great importance to the roles and functions of regional presence. For instance, in Kigali Action Plan and the relevant resolutions of ITU Conferences regarding the regional presence, the specific roles and functions of regional presence were highlighted, such as:

·The regional presence is the key driving factor of ITU-D priorities and their expected outcomes; and the outcomes of regional presence were defined. (Kigali Action Plan)

·The regional presence also plays the important coordination and collaboration role in the work of study groups and their questions, and is the main responsible body in implementing regional initiatives and projects. (Kigali Action Plan)

·The roles and functions of regional presence were instructed, strengthened and mentioned, including but not limited to Academy Training Center, strengthening coordination and collaboration with regional and subregional organization, implementing the outcomes of WSIS and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, regional preparation of WTDC, bridging the digital divide, child online protection, digital transformation and sustainable development, etc.,. (WTDC-22 resolutions)

·Improve regional presence by strengthening relations with regional telecommunications organizations, deepening cooperation with UN country teams, and paying particular attention to the least developed countries, and instruct the BDT Director to provide the guidance for future actions. (PP-22 Res.25)

1. **Discussion**

At present, ITU has established 6 regional offices and 8 area offices in 6 regions of the world. The ITU's regional and area offices have been actively supported by the host country in hosting ITU events and meetings, especially when ITU is unable to find other host countries and provided sufficient finance and technology supports. The experience shows that area office can be established either in countries where ICT is not well developed, or in countries where ICT is relatively developed in the area. Both approaches can help ICT development in these areas to fulfill the different needs from the region.

**3. Proposals**

1. The establishment of area offices should comprehensively consider various factors, including the host country's willingness, the needs from the relevant areas, the financial resources availability, geography representative etc. and should also take the previous experience into account.
2. Considering the BDT of ITU is responsible for regional and area offices, the standards for establishing area offices should be fully reviewed and discussed in TDAG and the future Council, in order to investigate and get full facts and knowledge about the potential gap in serving member states, and propose process and necessary standards and indicators accordingly in each region, and be reported back to future Council for approval.
3. The main purpose for establishment of area offices is to provide better services to Member States which are in need of assistance. Any standards to be developed for the establishment of area office should fulfill this objective.
4. The establishment of area offices should consider social and economic development of the countries intended to be served, with a particular priority to area offices serving the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_